

**LATINO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INSTITUTE'S 19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE:  
FROM MARGIN TO MAINSTREAM  
By Christopher Mandia**



The Latino Behavioral Health Institute (LBHI) hosted its 19<sup>th</sup> annual Latino Conference September 10-13, 2013, at the Sheraton Los Angeles Downtown Hotel. This year's theme, *Advancing Latino Behavioral Health; from Margin to Mainstream*, covered a vast array of mental health issues aimed to influence current workforce strategies in regards to the Latino community.

The four-day event hosted various speakers and workshops, including our own Marvin Southard, D.S.W., LACDMH Director, providing cultural insight into the unique dynamic comprising today's Latino community. Principal speaker Louis F. Ramirez, M.D., hosted a rather colorful discussion involving the artistic process in relation to mental health. Currently an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, Dr. Ramirez began his career in Columbia in 1975. According to Ramirez, artists – be it painters, writers, musicians, “carry certain characteristics, certain problem-solving skills that lend themselves to creative outputs.”



Unfortunately, these components of creativity regularly carry a dark side. Depression and mood disorders have plagued artists throughout history. As a glaring example, said Ramirez, “One can look at the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh – notably his self-portraits and see the evolution of his insanity.”

Nevertheless, with help from partners like LACDMH, LBHI hopes to implement early intervention strategies and enhance the skills of mental health providers to harness the potential of the Latino community – from margin to mainstream.

